

## Illinois State Police Mark 1000th 'Hit' Using ATF's Ballistic Imaging

One of Only Three Law Enforcement Agencies To Do So

CHICAGO, July 11 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Andrew L. Traver, Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Division of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), announced today that the Illinois State Police Laboratory in Chicago has recorded its 1000th ballistic imaging "hit" using ATF's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) program.

Through NIBIN, ATF deploys Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS) equipment into state and local law enforcement agencies for their use in imaging and comparing crime gun evidence.

"ATF congratulates the Illinois State Police on reaching this milestone in the use of NIBIN," Traver said at a ceremony at the Illinois State Police Laboratory. "The State Police now become only the third law enforcement agency in the country to reach the 1000th hit mark." The New York City Police Department and Allegheny County (Pa.) Coroner's Office achieved the distinction previously.

NIBIN users achieve a hit when they link two different crime investigations, where previously there had been no known connection between the investigations. A hit makes a link between cases, not individual pieces of evidence. Multiple bullets and/or casings may be entered as part of the same case record, with each discovered link to an additional case constituting a hit. A firearms examiner must then confirm the hit looking at the actual specimen under a microscope.

In Illinois, there are a total of nine sites with ballistic imaging equipment: seven maintained by the Illinois State Police, one in DuPage County, and one in Highland Park at the Northern Illinois Police Crime Laboratory.

The equipment allows firearms technicians to acquire digital images of the markings made by a firearm on bullets and cartridge casings; the images then undergo automated initial comparison. If a high-confidence candidate emerges, firearms examiners compare the original evidence to confirm a match. By minimizing the amount of non-matching evidence that firearms examiners must inspect to find a confirmable match, the NIBIN system enables law enforcement agencies to discover links between crimes more quickly, including links that would have been lost without the technology.

In funding and supporting the NIBIN program, ATF provides state and local law enforcement agencies with an effective intelligence tool that many could not afford on their own. The system also makes it possible to share intelligence across jurisdictional boundaries, enabling state and local law enforcement agencies to work together to stop violent criminals. ATF purchases IBIS equipment for deployment, and provides funding for regular upgrades and service, as well as administering the network through which NIBIN functions.

The NIBIN program is currently engaged in the sixth year of a multi-year expansion through which 222 sites have received IBIS equipment. When the deployment is complete in all 16 multi-state regions, IBIS technology will be available at approximately 235 sites, covering every state and major population center.

NIBIN provides invaluable information to law enforcement authorities. Since ATF and its partner agencies began using the technology in 2001,

1,286,500 pieces of evidence and more than 20,300 hits have been registered, many of them yielding investigative information not obtainable by any other means.